

Barfly by thestrangesttthing (dishrag)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Bar/Pub, Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Billy is a hot barman, Bisexual Male Character, Bisexual Steve Harrington, Boys In Love, California, Coming Out, Falling In Love, Fluff and Smut, Fluid Sexuality, Gay Billy Hargrove, Homophobic Language, Idiots in Love, Inspired by Stranger Things (TV 2016), Light Angst, M/M, OMG I'M GONNA MAKE A PLAYLIST, Sexuality Crisis, Slow Burn, Slurs, There's so many 80's songs in this, i'll add the sauciness later, is that a thing?, one night

Language: English

Characters: Barbara "Barb" Holland, Billy Hargrove, Kali Prasad, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington, Steve Harrington/Kali Prasad (kind of?)

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Summary:

Steve moves to California for a fresh start but something in a basement bar reminds him too much of Hawkins.

A modern Harringrove AU

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

- For [avengingbucks](#).

Yo I live for Stranger Things modern AUs so I wrote one. Expect it to get steamy in later instalments.

S/O to Mulletgrove for being the best beta

Steve smelled like Rosemary, not overwhelmingly so, but just enough for him to feel self conscious. He was worried if the lingering smell on his suede jacket would make him come across as too homely as he glanced at his date with dark eyeshadow and distressed denim, *everything*. It wasn't that homely was a bad thing. It wasn't. In his year in California he would have liked more things to remind him of home, be it ugly knitwear or an out of season cold day. But being homely wasn't the best thing to be when on a date with a girl that looked like Courtney Love's much cooler sister.

His dates squeezed his arm and peered up at him.

“This place is cool” she stopped in-front of a heavy metal door with rusted grating, plastered with weathered band stickers.

Steve recognised some of the bands, some of them even garnered a place in his Spotify library. He ran his finger over the half faded Feelies sticker.

“Must be cool” he beamed at her.

“Huh?” His date answered, her voice low and hesitant.

“No sign?” Steve chuckled.

“Yeah, bit of a cliché I guess” she pushed in front of him, using her entire body weight to open the door. She was small but strong.

The door opened with a low creak.

“Is it?” Steve murmured, his small-town background clearly showing through.

She turned around and smiled a small wry smile at him. “It’s 2018, everything is so cliché that it’s not a cliché and it’s back to being cool again.” She looked Steve up and down.

He had carefully curated to look like he’d put in as little effort as required for a first date in an un-ironically cliché bar. He wore a deep blue suede jacket perched over a very white t-shirt.

“Like the barman in this place, for instance, he looks like the villain in every 80’s movie ever” she turned around and began to carefully climb the steep stairs, a musky smell of cheap bourbon and damp lingering in the air and the sound of a Replacements record seeping through the walls.

Steve followed suit, gripping the worn handrail tightly as he

descended uneasily into the bar. “I always judged how terrible the villain was in the movie by how many buttons they had undone. The bigger the dick, the more buttons undone.”

“By that system, this barman is like a James Spader in *Pretty in Pink* level dick” she chuckled.

Steve raised his voice over the music, “Damn he must be a real shit head.”

“If his reputation is anything to go by” she opened the door to the bar, it was weathered like the one outside, but this time with the words 'SHE'S LOST CONTROL' spray-painted in worn red letters, with an unsteady hand across the centre. Steve wondered if she'd taken him as a sacrifice to a satanic cult. The vision of being pinned down on a table with a stranger lauding over him with a knife flashed through his mind.

“Well that's fucking ominous” Steve mumbled.

“Don't like Joy Division?” she turned back to look at Steve, who's brow was furrowed whilst examining the shaky letters.

“Oh shit yeah” Steve winced, of course it was Joy Division lyrics. Jonathan had that album cover obnoxiously tattooed on his forearm.

“I totally didn't think this was something this psycho barman of yours had spray painted after murdering his latest victim” Steve grinned

and opened the door with a hefty push of his arm. She rolled her eyes at him, disapprovingly and dipped under his extended arm, entering the bar.

“Will!” Steve’s date gave an angry obscene gesture to the barman, her middle finger sticking out with such force Steve was surprised it didn’t dislocate.

“Kali” Will’s voice was gruff and quiet and almost blended perfectly to the bass guitar of the song.

“I get it. Gotta keep it civil to keep from being kidnapped and murdered.” Steve chortled whilst eyeing up the empty seats on the other side of the room.

Kali jabbed Steve in the ribs before she swung down into an open booth and he grinned at her broadly. Steve had been told many things about the way he looked but the electricity in his smile was always the common factor. They sat at opposite ends of the table. Steve shrugged off his suede jacket and let it collect around his narrow hips.

“So Kali, what kind of drink?” Steve pulled his way back out of the booth, the deep green leather squeaking against his jeans.

“Pina Colada” Kali announced, beaming up at him. He waited for any sign of sarcasm to show through, there was no glint in her eye or quiver on her lip.

“Is... is that a *thing* here?” Steve asked hesitantly. His large brown eyes growing even wider with what looked to be impending embarrassment of asking James Spader for a Pina Colada.

“Calm down Stevie. Will over there knows what I drink” Kali chuckled and waved her hand towards the bar.

He breathed a shallow sigh of relief. Steve rubbed the back of his neck, praising the relief of his almost misstep “Ah, thank god.”

Kali hummed loudly in recognition over the music whilst pulling out her phone, an older model with a smashed screen and a pristine case.

Steve thought it was kind of fitting to her whole vibe, endearing in some ways and then kind of sad in another. Was she the kind of person to clumsily fumble her way through life, covering up the wreckage with tape and an apologetic smile?

“I’ll get the next round, dude”.

Steve wondered what conclusions Kali had quickly drawn together about him. That his t-shirt had that yellowish hue of being recently bleached. He wondered if she could still see the stains from Monday's flat white. What did his long hair say about him? How it curled at the nape of his neck or how he fidgeted with it so much it could get greasy within a few hours. Did she notice how he'd absent mindedly chew on his lip, occasionally so much so it looked like he'd been sloppily eating a red popsicle? Did she find it sexy or more like a gopher with a nervous tick?

The barman was faced away from him, stacking the top shelf with bottles that looked they belonged in Steve's dad's liquor cabinet, they were probably a lower percentage water than his dad's though. He scanned the rest of the wall, absentmindedly tapping his credit card on the bar, suddenly, in the lull between songs two bottles were set down in-front of him with a clink. Steve looked at the hand gripping the bottle necks, thick fingers covered with a plethora of silver rings, one with an embellished skull and another with a snake coiled around the skin.

"Let me guess, Kali played the whole Pina Colada routine with you?" he pushed the two beers towards Steve.

"Huh?" Steve's head snapped up and looked at the barman. "Oh, yeah."

He had one of those beautiful familiar faces. The kind of face that you see everywhere, splattered across magazines and movie posters.

"She's gonna chew you up and spit you out pretty boy" the barman stated in a low drawl, his blue eyes sparkling under heavy lashes in the dirty neon lighting of the bar.

"Excuse me?" Steve's voice hiked.

"You're just her type, that pretty but dopey, small town boy" he grinned sharkishly at Steve, drying a pint glass with a rag.

“What makes you so sure of that?” Steve growled in retort.

The barman sighed and placed the glass down and leaned forward. “She was in here last week with another twink, pretty sure I saw him leave in tears.”

Suddenly Steve was engulfed in a cloud of the barman's cologne, it was kind of distracting. “Twink? I was my high school...”

“Basketball captain?” he finished Steve’s sentence and learned in more, getting dangerously close to Steve's personal bubble.

“How do you know that?” Steve's eyebrows furrowed whilst he fixated on the square of the barman's chin.

The barman chortled in a low baritone laugh, “What other sport is gonna take a skinny fuck like you? You don't seem like the fencing type.” He leaned over the bar and Steve exhaled whilst a strong warm hand pressed momentarily around his upper arm, Steve flinched away quickly. “My sister could press more than you.”

“Fuck you” Steve pressed his credit card into the barman's bare chest.

“I'll remember that lovely sentiment when you're back over here.” He moved backwards, leaning against the back wall and sighed. He

smirked and rolled his eyes, “Way to talk to the guy giving you free drinks.”

“Free?” Steve quizzed, surprised but suspicious.

“Yeah, you're gonna need to get blasted to deal with her.”

Steve hesitantly slipped the credit card back into his wallet waiting for the barman to start laughing and demand the payment plus extra for being such a gullible idiot. He glanced back up at him momentarily and laced the bottles between his fingers. The barman's eyes watching Steve's fingers slip against the condensation.

“Is this from experience...” Steve asked.

“Just from observation, she's not my type.”

Before Steve could thank him, he grabbed the rag again and turned around. Steve glanced over his thick physique, his legs and ass clad in the tightest denim he'd ever seen. As he walked away, a pang of jealousy manifested in his stomach. Maybe he was a little scrawny.

“He gave them to me for free?” Steve slipped into the booth and slid a single brown bottle towards Kali. He was still confused about the whole ordeal, usually free things came after good interactions, not ones with strangers that were on the cusp of flirting and hostile.

“What? Ahhh” Kali looked up from her phone and chuckled with a knowing look in her eye. “Yeah, I figured he might try his routine on you.” She sipped her beer and put it back on the old table with a loud click.

Steve's eyes narrowed and darted between her and the bar whilst The Violent Femmes drawled in the background. Suddenly the vision of the sacrifice was back, this time with the barman lauding over him. His blonde curls hanging down and shadowing his face.

“This is getting weird, what's going on? Is there something going on with you two? Is this like some fetish thing? Are you planning on skinning me? I'm an open minded guy but I draw the line at being murdered.”

Kali laughed audibly, “Did he try and undermine your masculinity? That’s usually part of his whole *thing* ”

Steve’s mind quickly flitted towards the jibes and the heavy hand around his arm, a light blush crept up his neck. “Erm, no.”

“Oh okay, maybe he wasn't doing his thing then... must be in a good mood.” Kali sighed, somewhere between bemused and disappointed. She picked up her phone from the table and wiped the dampness from the back on her shirt and proceeded to flick through her Instagram account.

Steve mused upon the open shirted barman and glanced over at the bar. The lights soaking his white shirt a hazy shade of red. “He’s much better than I expected him to be, not quite James Spader.”

“Your uncle is a Bollywood star. That's gotta be the truth” Steve nursed on his third beer and smiled up at his date. He liked her but he wasn't really attracted to her. She was too short, too hard to read, *too scary* . That's at least what he told himself, when everytime he looked up from his beer, his mind wandered.

“I never took you for a racist Steve Harrington” Kali sniped, jokingly and picked up her phone and typed furiously.

“That was the most plausible of the three! Between a bronze medal in archery and 9 toes, the Bollywood thing seemed like a good call!” Steve whined.

Kali passed Steve her phone, with a video of her collecting her medal. Suddenly, the idea of being murdered by her wasn't too implausible. Definitely too scary.

“Damn, if you two did plan on murdering me I'd be no match. He could probably choke me out between his thighs.” Steve chuckled and guestered towards the barman.

Kali's eyes widened and she inhaled deeply.

Steve whistled. “I think I might need another drink.”

A silence hung between them.

“I can't believe he didn't try it on, you're just his type” Kali moaned, her voice further into annoyance. Steve could tell that Kali found pleasure in picking out people's patterns, he wasn't sure if it was a way to find solace or a way to find a way to undermine them.

Steve threw up his hands and awkwardly chuckled, “God, am I everybody's type out here?”.

Kali looked up at his soft face in the harsh lighting, his eyes wandering toward the other end of the room.

“Have you thought about that kind of thing? Like y'know guys?” Kali asked, sipping her beer “I won't judge, I've brought as many girls here as I have guys.”

Steve shifted and quickly shook his head. “Why'd you ask? It was that thigh comment wasn't it?” His voice hiked again, his cheeks flushed.

“That was pretty homoerotic of you dude” Kali imitated Steve's whistle. Steve winced at the lack of sarcastic tone in her voice.

Steve cleared his throat, “You can't call me homoerotic when good ol' Will over there looks like the poster child for repressed homosexuality. He looks like if a Hells Angel and George Michael had a child.”

“Well, yeah I guess that's the vibe he's going for” Kali said deadpan.

“He's gay?” Steve asked, leaning forward into the question, his elbow touching into something sticky.

“Yup” Kali nodded. Steve took a sip out of his beer. “Billy Hargrove, barman and a flaming homosexual.”

Steve inhaled and choked on his beer, he felt the sting of the bubbles burn the back of his throat. “Hargrove?” Steve muttered, his head snapping over to the bar, peaking a glance at the blonde barman. “You called him Will?”

“Yeah he hates being called Will, so I call him Will” Kali rolled her eyes at the apparent obviousness of it all.

That's why his face looked so familiar, Steve mused, chewing his bottom lip.

“Yeah, I think so.” Kali stated, leaning back into her chair and shrugging. She seemed irritated by the whole situation. After a period of distracted silence, Kali took out her phone, “I think I should go.”

A wave of relief washed over him, Steve began to stammer before his brain could catch up with his mouth. “Thank-god, because I, you're great but...”

"It's okay dude." Kali smiled warmly at him. This was the first glimmer of warmth that she'd shown in a while.

"I'll walk you home," Steve stood up hastily and collected the pile of suede around his legs, knocking his long thighs against the table.

She waved him down. "Don't worry about it, I live literally half a block away." She beckoned to his full drink. "Stay here, finish your drink." She looked over at Steve, wincing and clinging to his jacket, who looked like a doe caught in a surprising but not entirely bad situation.

"I'm sure they'll play something post 1990 if you don't like the 80s. You gotta ask Hargrove nicely though." She smirked and gave Steve a small wave. "See you around".

Steve sat down again and stared absentmindedly into the bar. He glanced over the furnishings. It was a weird mix of old and new, there were those odd green lamps that you only found in libraries and banks. None of the chairs matched, but not in a pretentious way, more so in a way that it looked like some had been stolen from weddings or various coffee chains. The walls were paneled with dark wood up until hip height, with the rest of the wall papered with old posters. There were layers upon layers of them, in most areas they didn't sit flush against the wall, with their edges peeling. Strings of fairy lights were nailed to the roof above the dance floor like a blanket of multicolored stars, they illuminated the faces of the patrons sat at the tables on the edges of the dancefloor, whilst the Psychedelic Furs jingled in the background. Steve kind of liked the place. Of all his remarks about the seeming cliché of it all, he thought it was kind of genuine.

Steve heard a voice creep up beside him breaking his chain of thought.

“Harrington. I'm surprised you didn't recognise me.” Billy purred into his ear, his voice thick like caramel.

“Hargrove”

Notes for the Chapter:

Here's the playlist for this fic, it's updated with every chapter. Enjoy.

<https://open.spotify.com/user/gpd7dshdvvmcih931hh7fwep/playlist/4vO4iOH1tRG3KhpP53u7Nz?si=SONDqSbARg2pAZaV258jeQ>

hmu on tumblr @ demogrove

2. Chapter 2

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy is an obnoxious ass. Steve decides on if he should call it a night.

Notes for the Chapter:

mulletgrove, my darling beta, you the best.

The hairs on Steve's body prickled in a hurried wave, starting beneath the cuff of his watch, the hairs cascading into one another until they reached the nape of his neck, sending a shiver down Steve's body that he tried desperately to stifle. He turned slowly toward the voice, worried that he would come across as egar.

Billy was stood with one arm on the top of the booth, the other hand fishing out a cigarette from behind his ear. He dangled the cigarette between his lips, it flicked upwards with his smile when he noticed Steve's rotated body.

Steve wasn't sure how he was supposed to feel, a knot in his stomach formed, so heavy it felt like lead. He was overly aware of the difference between them, both in space and in attitude. Billy stood confidently but nonchalantly, carefully propped against the chair. Steve was perched in the booth, hands in his lap, his large doe eyes peering at his captor. Steve thought he must like a rabbit caught by a fox, pleading with desperation to be let loose. He forced his shoulders to relax and released the breath he had been holding far too long for it to look natural.

Billy flicked open his lighter, the mechanism grinding lightly, clicking into a long flame that quivered in motion. He leaned into the flame, the cigarette contacted the flame lightly. The tobacco lit slowly,

spreading across the tip in a delicate slow burn, only speeding up when Billy took a deep inhale. The whole process seemed very delicate, far more delicate than he'd give Billy credit for.

"You know it's illegal to smoke inside right?" Steve chimed, wanting to hear something other than the pitter of the background music and the heaviness of Billy's inhales.

The way people smoked could reveal a lot about them, the way they held the cigarette, the length of the drags, the way they either blew out the smoke or let it seep out of their mouth in an almost viscous fashion.

Billy held the stick tightly between his thumb and index finger, pursing his lips tightly as he took a drag. There was something inherently aggressive about it. The way that Marlon Brando would smoke, in a long drag before flicking it off into the distance.

Steve could imagine Billy flicking a cigarette at someone.

"I can do whatever I want, it's my bar" Billy growled, talking whilst the cigarette delicately clung to his lips.

"Is it?" By now Steve had realised he'd spent an inordinate amount of time looking at Billy's mouth.

"Yeah I won in it in a game of poker" Billy moved to the table, perching on the table top. His legs extended and ankles crossed. The

elegant movement looked odd in his heavy biker boots.

“Are you serious” Steve leaned forward, his voice hiking in disbelief. It was becoming painfully aware to him that he didn’t have much control over his vocal expressions. He’d be terrible in poker.

Billy dipped his head back slightly to get a better look at Steve and raised his eyebrows.

“Would I lie to you Harrington?” His voice was almost the antithesis of Steve’s, it was deep and smooth. He finished the sentiment with a broad grin.

“You literally have no reason not to lie to me” Steve stated confidently, rectifying his earlier mistake. He leaned back into his seat and swigged his beer.

“Never realised you were such a cynic” Billy faced forward again, speaking slowly between the aggressive puffs of his cigarette.

Steve swirled the final mouthful in his bottle. “Cautious, not cynical” he peered into the bottle, one eye closed, the other squinting.

Billy didn’t answer but Steve could feel his eyes dart in his direction. He knew they were on him, silently judging him through the veil of Billy’s curls. He set the beer on the table with a loud click.

“Are you not going to serve people?” Steve loudly asked over the music. It was a track from a Kiwi band that always cropped up on his Spotify. He recognised the start because he’d heard it a thousand times before skipping it. He actually liked the whole thing.

“It’s just locals left now. They can serve themselves.” Billy said nonchalantly.

Steve scanned the room, Billy was right. There was only a spattering of people left. A group of college kids that looked barely younger than he did. A middle aged businessman who look like he’d just finished work. He didn’t seem like the kind of person to come here. Steve bets it’s for the music. There was couple in back of the room in a booth, leaned into one another over the table, each of their faces soft with fondness.

“They won’t pull any shit, I know where they live” Billy added in the same tone.

Steve couldn’t tell if the threat was empty or not.

Breaking Steve’s transfixion on the other patrons of the bar, Billy swung round into the seat in front him, his legs spread wide, knocking Steve’s knees in the process. He plucked the almost finished cigarette out of his mouth and stuffed it into Steve’s almost finished beer and then reverted to his open sprawling posture.

“D’you not want to catch up with an old high school friend?” The grin on Billy’s face face looked almost threatening.

Usually Steve would have just pushed off this obvious act of aggression. He'd had enough douchebags trying to get in his face to know when to give a smart answer or not. Back in highschool he would have chewed up Billy Hargrove, he was weedier and quieter, only showing a modicum of anything on the basketball court. Now something was significantly different and not just in the way that he filled out his jeans and the arms of his shirt.

"We barely spoke" Steve stated, hesitantly.

Billy shrugged, "Does that matter?" He reached instinctively for his ear, obviously looking for another cigarette, pushing a chunk of hair back in the process.

"You have a very loose definition of friendship" Steve responded wryly as he watched a loose curl spring from behind his ear.

"How'd The King of Hawkins end up in my shitty bar with Kali Prasad on a Thursday night?" Billy pried, extending his arm along the length of the booth, causing his shirt to gape further, Steve couldn't help but notice what looked like to be a tattoo under one of his pecs.

Steve didn't feel like being pruned by an old acquaintance that he recognised less and less by the second. "Felt like a change" he hissed.

"Felt like a change" Billy moaned mockingly. He leaned forward and let his hand fall onto the table with a heavy thud, startling Steve in the process. Everything about the way he acted was volatile, he was

like a minefield. “Do I need to get you drunk to unlock your tragic backstory or what?” Billy flipped his hand, palm facing upwards, his chunky ring knocking the table with the movement.

“Fuck you” Steve barked.

“That’s more like it!” Billy sang, like a petulant child. His blue eyes glinting as he tilted his head backwards.

“I never realised you were such an insufferable ass” Steve rolled his eyes and Billy clicked his tongue and averted his gaze. He couldn’t help but remember this form of Billy, solemn and quietly disappointed. Steve glanced over Billy’s form quickly whilst the other wasn’t looking. California had been very kind to him. The knot in his stomach formed again as his eyes flickered over the taught material on his biceps, how the stitches waned as he idly drummed his fingers on the table, the rolled sleeves gave way to exposed forearms, whose veins pulsated with every move. Maybe it was worth hanging around to get some workout tips or something.

Steve pulled out his phone and checked for messages, looking for any flimsy excuse to leave. He had no such luck, not even a whisper of a get out clause.

He sighed a long heavy sigh. The kind of sigh you take where you quite haven’t made up your mind about what you’re going to do at the end of the sigh. He gathered his coat, stood up and straightened his jeans.

“Okay, we are going to move to the bar and I’m... *We are* going to drink some of the hard stuff.”

Billy looked at the now standing Steve, his hands on his hips and his jacket looped through his left arm.

“For free” Steve added hastily. He wasn’t going to pay for a night where he wasn’t sure if he was going to leave in a body bag or leave pleasantly surprised. He hoped for the latter. Plus he was 3 beers down and feeling brave, even against the ever growing human monolith that was Billy Hargrove.

“You’re acting pretty self assured for someone who told me to fuck off not long ago” Billy’s eyebrow twitched and his lip pulled into a snarl. He stood up and walked towards Steve.

Steve gripped his fingers deeper into his hips and inhaled deeply through his nose. Billy edged into uncomfortable territory, his bare chest almost touching Steve’s t-shirt. Steve held his breath as Billy glanced over his face, his brows knitted and his blue eyes narrow. There was a tension in his thick jaw. Everything about him was so sturdy, Steve was sure he could kill him in one blow.

The bar was dark and drafty, a cold chill ran up Steve’s spine causing him to shake suddenly.

“You only get the cheap shit” Billy said smirking, clearly amused. His eyes took on a playful glint that was absent before, pupils dark and cavernous in the poorly lit room. He walked back out of Steve’s space and towards the bar.

“Out” he barked at the businessman who was nursing a mixed drink, tapping his fingers on the glass to the beat of Rock the Casbah. The man jumped in his stool and skittered out of the bar. Billy grabbed the drink and finished it in one gulp.

Steve winced at the grossness of it.

“So Harrington, Tequila?”

Notes for the Chapter:

Here's the playlist for this fic, it's updated with every chapter. Enjoy.

<https://open.spotify.com/user/gpd7dshdvvemcih931hh7fwep/playlist/4vO4iOH1tRG3KhpP53u7Nz?si=SOndqSbARg2pAZaV258jeQ>

3. Chapter 3

Summary for the Chapter:

Steve and Billy get drunk and things get interesting

Notes for the Chapter:

@ mulletgrove u the best beta

Billy rifled his way through the bottom shelf of liquors, feeling the bottle necks and shapes as he went. He parted the bottles and pulled out a bottle from the back, an amber liquid in a rectangular bottle almost filled to the brim.

That wasn't a good sign, the tiny absence of liquid suggested some unfortunate soul had opened it, tasted it and decided they weren't going to drink it and now Steve was going to have to drink it. His nose wrinkled instantly at the thought of it burning down his throat.

Billy poured two large shots in whiskey glasses.

Those were definitely bigger than normal shots, Steve thought, resisting the urge to ask Billy if he was trying to get him drunk. He handed Steve a glass, the liquid sloshing up the side as it collided with Steves open palm, leaving a golden film on the glass.

"Lime?" Steve quizzed whilst peering at the ominous liquid.

"Do I look like a lime guy?" Billy barked, causing Steve to lift his head. Billy glared at him with a 'how dare you' look on his face.

Steve wondered if he's accidentally called him a terribly homophobic slur, was 'lime guy' the Californian equivalent to what the kids called him back in elementary school?

"We are literally in a bar" Steve leaned over the bar in an attempt to spot some of those green little devils.

Billy shrugged and knocked back the XL shot. He hissed slightly and clenched his teeth.

Steve's turn. He held back the urge to hold his nose, like he used to do when his mom would force him to eat fish. He wasn't going to be out drank by the younger guy he was having some strange My Dinner With Andre situation with. He closed his eyes and threw the liquid back, clicking his teeth against the glass in the process. It tasted like what could only be described as unrefined battery acid. He sucked in air through his mouth, creating a very pathetic wheeze. Through the tears in his eyes, he looked at Billy, the corners of his blue eyes crinkled with amusement. Asshole.

Steve waited impatiently for the skin on his mouth to stop feeling like it was peeling off before talking.

"Did you really win this place in a poker game?" he asked, still tasting the taste of iron in his mouth. He hoped that was just the aftertaste and not blood, although he wouldn't be surprised.

"I really didn't think you were as dopey as you looked" Billy retorted, after easily knocking back a second shot.

Steve thought that was just adding insult to injury. He glared at Billy and plopped himself down on the wooden barstool. The lull in the conversation enabling him to hear the song pittering in the background, Dance Hall Days or something like that. He wasn't good with 80's music.

"My mom died and she left this place to me" Billy stated suddenly, the honesty catching Steve off guard.

"Max's mom?" Steve pressed cautiously.

"No, my real mom. She stayed in Cali when her and my dad got divorced." Billy poured Steve another shot.

Steve figured it wasn't the time to complain about the quality of the liquor.

"How come you didn't stay with her?" Steve asked softly. He leaned into the bar in order to hear Billy better, who was still pacing behind the narrow bar. Billy's jaw was taut with frustration, his eyebrows poised angrily and his eyes tinged with something a little closer to regret.

"Between a junkie and a prick with a decent job who'd you think got custody?" Billy hissed back at him and took a swig straight from the bottle.

Steve didn't want to upset him further, "That's hard man" he said genuinely, shaking his head at the injustice of it all.

"Yeah, this shithole is growing on me though, finally" Billy gusted to the vastness of the dingy bar.

There really was something about it that Steve liked, "Me too" Steve added giving Billy a small smile. The tension in Billy's jaw dropped, letting his face soften, as did the knot in Steve's stomach.

Steve glanced at the liquid before hawking it down. He swallowed the last of it with an 'ugh' and a shudder and played with the final bead of liquid in his glass. Focusing on tossing it left to right and around the rim.

"How about we play a game?" Billy stood flush against the counter, his belt buckle clinking as it made contact with the brass plating on the edge.

Steve looked up from his glass and absent mindedly traced the open V of Billy's shirt with his eyes. Even in the darkness of the bar the golden hue of his skin stood out against the white of his shirt. He looked for the tattoo under Billy's pec, then his chiseled abs caressed by the neon lights and finally to the apex of the V. The final button mocked Steve, like it was daring his eyes to go further. Tipsy and unaware, Steve pulled his lower lip between his teeth and let his mind and eyes wander, just for a second. In that second, he imagined Billy pinning him down on the bar, like earlier but this time stripped of any weird capes, his heavy hands pinning Steve's like a vice and with Billy's head so close to his own he could almost taste him.

“Like, truth or dare?” Billy asked, catching Steve’s wandering eye.

Steve sat up straight on his stool a flush creeping up his neck. God, he was drunk. “No, there’s two of us. That makes no sense... w-why would you say that?” Steve stuttered, leaning backwards to gain a little distance between them.

Billy leaned in, his large palms splayed out on the bar, “Maybe, I’m just looking for a way to get you to do what I want” he purred, a cunning wink in his eye.

Suddenly, Steve’s drunken mind wanderings seemed plausible. Without thought Steve’s brown eyes wandered to the bow of Billy’s lips. If Billy didn’t know that Steve was straight, he’d be sure he’d be flirting with him. Although Steve was straight he enjoyed the attention. Billy was hot. Unbelievably hot. Everything about him oozed sex, from the way his voice was in a constant deep purr to his perpetual bedroom eyes. *‘I’d fuck him’*, crossed Steve’s mind , *‘I’d let him fuck me’*. God, drunk Steve is a nightmare.

“How about,” Steve leaned back carefully, “You make a statement about me and if it’s true I drink and vice versa.”

“Alrighty, pretty boy” Billy growled and collected the emptying bottle of poison and his glass and opened the hatch of the bar, letting it fall down with a loud bang, making Steve jump. Billy pulled out the stool next to Steve and poured a drink for each of them. He extended out his leg, so it extended past where Steve was sitting, rather cautiously on the bar stool.

“Why are you out here?” Billy asked, pulling out the cigarette from behind his ear, that in his drunken stupor Steve had failed to notice he’d replaced.

“Not a statement” Steve quibbled.

Billy sighed and rolled his eyes. He leaned forward so Steve could definitely hear him over the prattle of another 80’s song.

“Did that Wheeler chick come to college out here and you moved out with her like some *sappy puppy*, ” his tone was quietly aggressive, “and then you dumped her after realising what an uptight bitch she is” Billy added, unnecessarily.

Steve glared at Billy. He knocked back the shot, the liquor had finally started to burn less.

Billy raised his eyebrows, possibly surprised that his snipe at Nancy Wheeler turned out to be true.

“I don’t wanna talk about it” Steve stated, tipping his empty glass towards Billy. “You can’t talk about her that way” he added blankly, evidently trying to control his slurs.

“I can talk about her however I want,” Billy sniped, folding his arms, “You’re in my bar drinking for free” he picked up the bottle and jiggled it obnoxiously.

“Maybe if you weren’t such an ass I wouldn’t have to get drunk on that hell juice to be able to talk to you” Steve leaned into Billy, and spread his legs into the motion, knocking Billy’s outstretched leg.

“Feisty” Billy ran his tongue over his bottom lip and winked.

“Fuck you” Steve released and relaxed back onto the stool, letting the tension go from his legs.

“So you keep saying” Billy retorted in his smarmy tone, his eyebrows twitching, clearly desperate to get a rise out of King Steve. The same King Steve that had been the guy to beat in that little shit hole town. The one the girls fawned over so openly it was just part of the town. He was confident and cocky and the hottest piece of ass in Hawkins. A lot of that had changed, minus that last one.

Steve slumped back, deflated and Billy was clearly disappointed. He filled Steve’s glass back up. Suddenly Steve leaned forward again, his brows furrowed.

“So what’s with this *whole* look?” Steve waved his hands in an exaggerated manner. “Was scrawny high school Billy not getting enough attention?” He sniped, eager to repay the discomfort Billy had caused him earlier. If that was even possible.

“Is that why you switched to boys?” he added, as an afterthought, a very poorly thought out afterthought. “I didn’t mean it like that.” What did Steve mean by it? He knew you didn’t just choose to switch

between boys and girls.

Billy glared at Steve, his eyes flitted over Steve's clearly panicked face.

"There's a whole host of reasons to switch to boys" Billy leaned in and placed a large hand on Steve's thigh.

It was warm and firm, different to anything Steve had ever experienced before. Billy looked at him with heavy eyelids. In Steve's haze he didn't bat him away, he enjoyed the pressure and the intimacy. Billy was hot, so hot. *What the hell?*

"Do you want me to go into them?" Billy chuckled, pulling his hand away.

"Go on, tell me" Steve leaned forward, bravely grabbing Billy's hand and placing it back. Steve felt the warmth of Billy's hand on top of his. Steve felt the coarseness of his jeans underneath his palm.

"Really?" Billy looked at him nervously. The song behind them spoke of a special secret way.

"Yeah" Steve shifted his hand further up to his crotch, his long fingers creeping up the denim, with Billy's large hand in tow. Billy looked at him with hungry eyes. Steve hadn't felt this way in a long time. To have someone clearly so into him, someone so gorgeous. *'This is fine, I'm just having fun, I deserve some attention'* Steve thought

to himself as his cock flushed against his jeans. *'I'm not gay, I'm just making the most of the situation.'* followed as a sudden rush of blood urged its way to his crotch.

Billy snapped his hand away, he knew not to go after a straight boy. "Maybe later, it's my turn to give you a statement or whatever..."

Notes for the Chapter:

Playlist:

[https://open.spotify.com/user/
gpd7dshdvemcih931hh7fwep/
playlist/4vO4iOH1tRG3KhpP53u7Nz?
si=BSCucPCpTNGbVq7SpveCKA](https://open.spotify.com/user/gpd7dshdvemcih931hh7fwep/playlist/4vO4iOH1tRG3KhpP53u7Nz?si=BSCucPCpTNGbVq7SpveCKA)

4. Chapter 4

Summary for the Chapter:

Steve confronts his feelings in the bathroom of Billy's bar and continues to confront them after he leaves.

Notes for the Chapter:

So yeah, I got excited by this and wrote another chapter in a day. This was supposed to be like a 7k word fic.

@mulletgrove, you the best beta there is.

Steve looked at Billy wide eyed and worried. Billy smoked the cigarette, facing away from Steve, his palm open, the cigarette perched between his index and middle finger. This time he smoked much less aggressively. Steve watched the smoke gently seep out of his mouth, fluttering off into the bar.

“Can I?” Steve held out his hand for Billy to pass him the cigarette.

Billy shrugged and passed him the cigarette, the tips of their fingers brushing. Steve's breath hitched with the contact. Billy was nonchalant to the contact and this had Steve worried. Maybe Billy wasn't gay. He hadn't actually heard Billy tell him he was, sure he had been giving Steve come-to-bed eyes all night and Kali, Kali had told him he was gay but how reliable was she? Maybe they'd been in on it together from the start, maybe they were filming a TV show or something, maybe he's going to have to sign a waiver when he tries to leave the bar. What if everyone back home knew he'd flirted back? What would his parents think? It's like that time in 6th grade all over again...

Steve's stomach flipped in somersaults. He wasn't sure if it was the alcohol or something else, in that instant a barrage of emotions hit him like a freight train

Steve stood up suddenly and announced, "I have to use the bathroom". He handed the cigarette back to Billy.

"Okay..." Billy answered, his tone somewhere between confused and bored. He pointed towards the bathrooms.

Steve stumbled into the bathroom. It was brighter than the bar, but only just. There was a blue hue in there and recalled reading about it. How places used it so people couldn't find a vein to shoot up. *Very classy Billy.*

He paced back and forth in there, trying to place the barrage of feelings coming towards him at a thousand miles per hour. Maybe he was having a heart attack, maybe his lungs were collapsing in on themselves. He felt like he should get Billy. No, he wasn't going to get Billy, all Billy would do was laugh at him for being a pussy. For being a pussy and a *faggot*.

Faggot. The word rang out in his head like the ricochet of a bullet bouncing round the confines of a shipping container. He'd been called that word before, not just by his opponents on the basketball court, but by Charlie Danson in 6th grade, before he knew he wasn't supposed to kiss boys.

He remembered his mom stroking the back of his head as they sat at the kitchen table as he asked what ‘faggot’ meant, whilst his dad glared at him enigmatically from across the room. His mom smiled at him weakly and mumbled to his dad, *‘It’s okay, because he’s not that so it’s okay, he needn’t worry about it’* . After that he’d forgotten about it for the most part.

Steve matured faster than the boys in his grade, his clothes were nice and fashionable, girls clung off him as soon as they realised they wanted to cling on to boys.

It wasn’t until he was 15 and he was supposed to shower after gym class or basketball practice. He’d always skitter out before the showers could be turned on. He’d say something like ‘ *I didn’t want you gays looking at my cock* ’ when asked about it at lunch time and laugh before the knot formed in his stomach.

That unexplainable pervasive knot.

At 17 his uncle came out as gay to family, Steve’s dad hugged him and gave him an oracular smile and told him it was fine. He then proceeded to ignore his calls. About 3 weeks later a picture of Nancy’s friend Barb circulated, it featured her kissing a girl from another school. She shrugged her shoulders confidently and then that was that. He suddenly knew two gay people in the space of a month, in the sleepy town of Hawkins. After that he dropped Tommy H and the others who still used gay as an insult.

He remembered driving out to Chicago with Barb and Nancy to a Pride parade where he’d stand awkwardly back from the crowd

whilst they enjoyed the festivities. He watched Barb swing her arm around her girlfriend whilst smiling at her brightly in the June sunshine until that damn knot formed in his stomach. He wondered if his dad felt dizzy in the same way he did when he'd watch two men hold hands, maybe he was a homophobe, just like his dad.

The engematic knot was there when Kali asked him about if he'd, 'y'know, considered guys'.

It was there when he found out Billy was gay.

It was there when Steve looked over the planes of Billy's chest and when Billy placed his hand on Steve's leg, until it wasn't.

Fuck.

Steve leant over the sink and splashed water on his face, the cold droplets ran down his neck, soaking the collar of his t-shirt. His heart was in his throat. He closed his eyes and focused on breathing, suddenly the most natural thing in the world was difficult. He leaned over the sink and cupped the stream of water with his hands, gulping down a couple of handfuls before turning off the tap and resting his hands on either side of the sink. He breathed in heavily catching his breath. Suddenly he felt very sober.

He pulled his phone out of his jean pocket and scrolled to the messages until he reached Barb's name. Her picture was of her with

her red hair and galaxy-like freckles and Steve at Nancy's 20th birthday party, she had surprised Nancy by coming to California from Europe.

Steve: 'Barb'

'How did you know you were gay?'

He tapped out the message before closing his eyes and pressing send. It wasn't the middle of the night in Berlin, maybe she would respond. That was one good thing, the only good thing, about Barb being on a different continent. There would be a sober ear to his middle of the night, drunken existential ramblings.

Barb: 'We've been over this Steve'

Steve: 'I know you love talking about being gay'

Barb: 'You know me too well. I just could never see the appeal of boys, ever, and girls are just so pretty. I could see the appeal of boys, kinda, I get why people are bi'

Steve: 'So you never liked boys, didn't you think you were bi at all?'

Barb: 'Nope, how come?'

Steve locked his phone before another message flashed on the screen.

Barb: 'Watched another Tom Hardy movie? ;)'

Steve chuckled and sighed. He was more confused than ever, but was grateful that the knot in his stomach had eased.

“Worried you’d skipped out on me Harrington.”

Steve was hoping that was true.

“And miss free booze and all these 80s tunes? Not a chance Hargrove.”

Steve noticed Billy stifling a small smile and shook his head whilst pulling out another cigarette. He tapped the end and placed it between his lips.

Steve slid behind the bar and pulled a bottle of whiskey from the top shelf and two fresh glasses. And slammed them down behind Billy, causing him to jump.

Billy looked around to find Steve bent over, rifling through the

fridge. He leaned over the bar and waited for Steve to catch his eye. The white light of the fridge illuminated Steve's speckled face. Billy noticed that Steve's face was more relaxed, a tension had gone somehow. Steve's face was always so soft and transcendently kind. He always kind of felt bad about elbowing it in basketball practise.

"I'm not drinking any more of that shit Hargrove" Steve looked up at Billy with his large brown eyes.

Billy grumbled in recognition and slid back down on the barstool. Out of nowhere, a plastic water bottle hit him hard on the shoulder.

"You prick" he hissed but picked up the 500ml bottle, obviously confused by the lack of alcohol. "What's this for?"

"We won't be able to go all night if we keep going at this rate" Steve answered, before sipping on the water.

"All night?" Billy muttered whilst cracking the seal on the clear bottle and taking a few large gulps.

Steve wandered back around to the front of the bar and sat down again.

By this point there was only one other group left in the bar. The college kids and their pitchers of beer. Their loudness offsetting the dull prattle of that Pixies song Jonathan would play, *all the time* . Upon sitting down he poured whiskey into the two glasses, decidedly

smaller than Billy's portions.

"Where were we?" Steve asked, sliding the glass across the bar towards Billy.

"You're worried you don't know what you're doing with your life" Billy stated, almost nonchalantly.

Steve was taken aback by the almost callousness of it, causing him to choke slightly on his water. "Come on Hargrove, aren't these supposed to be deep personal secrets?" he laughed, still feeling the buzz of his bathroom based revelation.

Billy leaned forward, his eyes narrowed. "What happened you? In high school, you were like this super popular confident guy and you're like this lost little lemming."

"And you were supposed to be going to Harvard or some fancy school" Steve retorted, still surprised by the almost malice in Billy's tone.

Billy scoffed and rolled his eyes, "Oh, so now you suddenly remember me?"

"Yeah, some bits" Steve answered.

"What bits?" Billy pressed, his eyes fixated on the tip of Steve's nose.

It was kind of off putting actually, was Billy trying to throw him off?

“That you were always an ass in basketball practice but never anywhere else, that you were a quiet, smart kid,” that ended up more of a compliment than a devastating retort, “What's changed? Other than the obvious, uh aesthetic stuff...”

“Is that all you remember?” Billy rolled his eyes again and shook his head. “Trust King Steve to have had his head so far up his ass...” Billy growled.

“You’re very forgettable” Steve interrupted, winking at him in the process.

Suddenly the crowd of college kids made their way out of the bar and up the stairs to the sound of Blue Monday in the background.

“I guess you want to lock up? D’you want me to head out?” Steve asked apprehensively.

Maybe he had misread the signs maybe Billy wasn’t interested at all. He’d been nothing but hard to read for the past 20 minutes. When he didn’t get a reply he started to stand up but suddenly there was a vice like grip on his forearm. He looked at Billy, whose eyes were pointed and hungry like a predator looking at his prey.

“I’m anything but forgettable” Billy’s voice was thick like honey again. The voice that made all Steve’s hairs stand on end. He watched

Billy lick his lips and a tingle shivered down his abdomen. He wondered how many other times he could have felt like this, if he hadn't been so busy seeing the world through his black and white lense.

Fuck it .

Billy was right. Even if the title makes Steve cringe, he used to be the King, and King Steve would go after anything he wanted.

Steve tried to replicate Billy's husky tone looked him up and down, "Yeah, *now* .

Suddenly the air was thick and tight between them, their eyes locked just for a moment before Billy pulled away.

Steve was disappointed, he was on the cusp of something that he finally wanted to put a name to and now suddenly he wasn't playing ball.

Billy's jaw tensed but his eyes wandered hungrily all over Steve's slight frame.

"I guess you're right, I've no fucking clue what I want from my life" Steve laughed, a bubbling of hysteria just below the surface and raised his glass absently and took a swig. He absolutely had no idea where his life was going, but for once it was kind of freeing rather than blood curdling terrifying.

“Uh, I guess it’s my go then” Steve stammered, sitting back down on the stool. He thought hard about what to say next. God, this was hard work. How was he supposed to tell Billy that he came into this whole situation a straight man with a bunch of repressed sexuality issues and now wanted him to bend him over the bar and fuck him senseless. He felt his cock twitch at that final sentiment.

“Am I really your type?” Steve asked finally, leaning in dangerously close so he could feel Billy’s breath on his face as he leant in to steal a cigarette from Billy’s front pocket. He parted and licked his lips slowly and placed the cigarette between them, forcing Billy’s eyes to be transfixed on his lips with David Bowie's sexual crooning in the background.

Billy plucked the cigarette from his lips and put it between his own, he lit it and let the smoke seep from the end like the end of a stick of incense, slowly and seductively.

“That’s a question not a statement Harrington” he said with a roll of his eyes.

“You didn’t say no” Steve caught Billy’s eyes, the pools of blue being taken over by large obsidian pupils.

Still locking eyes with Steve, Billy pulled up his glass and took a long pointed drink, the expensive liquor trickling down his throat like molten gold. He bit his lip and sucked in air between his teeth and looked at Steve through his heavy lidded eyes. Steve’s lips were parted, his eyes ravenous. Steve wanted to lick the whiskey from his lips, and trace his tongue down Billy's chest. Billy could hear Steve's breath hitch as he licked the final drops of liquor off his lips.

“Okay, my turn Harrington” Billy said and Steve leant forward, opening his legs so his knees, knocked with Billy’s. Steve hummed in agreement.

“I don’t think you’re as straight as you think you are, *pretty boy* ,” Billy smirked but his smile faltered a bit. This is what he’d always wanted, to have Steve Harrington as putty in his hands, ever since he’d seen his stupid hair bobbing about at Taylor Fitzsimmons’ party.

There was a pause, Billy looked up and tried to read Steve’s expression. Steve looked at him quizzically, his beautiful brown eyes soft and open, but filled with something undeniable.

Then Steve picked up his glass and took a long deep drink, maintaining eye contact the entire time. Making a pointed effort to make sure Billy knew that was a resounding *I know* . He put the empty glass on the bar with a soft clink.

Billy looked at Steve with a soft expression, trying to stifle a smile and maintain an air of mystery and asked, “Am I your type?”

Steve chuckled and stood up, the music waning between songs.

“If you only knew the half of it Hargrove.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/user/>

gpd7dshdvemcih931hh7fwep/
playlist/4vO4iOH1tRG3KhpP53u7Nz?
si=gGRB0rkwSYWGTv19MlD6XA

hmu on tumblr @ arringrove

5. Chapter 5

Despite the stream of almost constant drinking Steve felt incredibly sober. He felt so very aware of everything around him, like the smell of the musty damp bar. It smelt like his dad's garage, it was a smell Steve had always liked, in a peculiar way. He would walk into the the garage and breath deeply, letting the musk and dust fill his lungs. It reminded him of sneaking beer out of his beer fridge or rifling through old treasures he'd been sure he'd lost. Steve could taste the cheap tequila and the expensive whisky on his tongue, the milieu of flavours hovering on his taste buds. He could hear every beat of the song, every whisper in Robert Smith's voice and every quiver of the guitar. Every hair on his body stood on end, he could feel them brush against his clothes like static.

He felt the the weight of his feet on the floor, he felt it so intensely he could almost feel the grain of the wood beneath his boots. He could hear his heart beat in his chest and feel it in his throat. He felt the blood rush to his cheeks and his cock, burning like rivers of fire as they went. He hear Billy's breathing, it was heavy and pointed like his own. Subconsciously, he switched his exhale to match with Billy's , to let his chest rise and fall with his. Steve's round eyes waned like the crescent moon, there was no need to look up, everything he wanted was right below him.

He felt confident and desired, the way that Billy almost growled when he looked up at Steve sent every nerve in Steve's body into overdrive. Billy splayed his legs wide, consciously willing Steve to move between them, bleached denim pulled tight across his thick thighs. Billy leaned backwards cautiously in order to get a better look at Steve. Billy locked and tensed his core, the peaks and shadows on his stomach made him look almost statuesque. Billy's whole body was taut with anticipation.

Steve moved forward finally and let his pillowy lips linger above Billy's ear. He parted his lips and sighed slightly, he could see the thin pale hairs on Billy's neck stand up. The curls of Billy's hair tickled the tip of Steve's nose, it was softer than he anticipated it to be and it smelled faintly like honey and barley. He was very careful to make as little as contact as possible. He wanted this to last, he wanted to drive him absolutely crazy.

"You wanna take this back to my place?" Steve whispered, letting his lips brush lightly against Billy's ear. He realised that he had never tried to be sexy like this before, to chase someone else rather than have someone chase him. It was exhilarating.

Billy clamped his hand around Steve's jaw and pulled his face close so their eyes met. Suddenly Steve couldn't breathe, like a tiger caught in trap, a hunter being hunted. Billy parted his lips slightly and ran his tongue over his bottom lip. His eyes flitted over Steve's face. From the stray dark hairs that fell onto his forehead to the newly formed California freckles spattered across his nose. Billy felt Steve's jaw tense under his grip, a bulge of muscle forming underneath his thumb.

Billy tightened the grip on Steve's jaw as he rose from the barstool, kicking it backwards. With the extra height from his boots he stood at the same height as Steve.

Steve ignored the screech of wood on wood and the clatter of the bar stool and remained fixated on Billy's face. God was he something. Maybe if he'd have been like this in high school he would have dropped to his knees in the locker room after basketball practise.

He could feel the tension in Billy's arm and could see the tautness in

his chest. They were dangerously close, their breath mixed like smoke and steam. Billy caressed Steve's jaw with the heel of his thumb. Steve wanted nothing more than for Billy to tilt his head backwards and leave a trail of bruised kisses down his neck.

Steve wasn't used to this but he was pretty sure that sexual electricity worked the same way regardless of who it was with. He wasn't used to the hesitation or the waiting. Maybe Billy was getting ready to kick his ass. He wasn't sure he deserved that, but this, the agonising *waiting*, he could have been the biggest dick in the world to him in high school and he definitely didn't deserve *this*.

Billy loosened his grip and traced his fingers under Steve's chin, slightly at first, carasseing over the bulge of his adam's apple, Steve gulped slowly under his touch. He traced Steve down his sternum, gradually getting firmer as he went. He absent mindedly bit his lower lip as he traced the line he was going to leave bruised kisses on. Steve's breath hitched as he paused mid chest. He lifted his head and looked Steve dead in the eyes. Those brown eyes quivered with anticipation, begging Billy to *keep going*.

For some reason a laugh bubbleed in Steve's throat, he contained it well, not breaking the tension. He couldn't believe he was here. Here in California. Here in Billy Hargrove's shitty bar. Here with Billy Hargrove's palm splayed across his chest, causing his heart to jump sporadically between stopping and beating so erratically that he thought he was going to drop dead.

Suddenly Billy pushed, hard. Steve stumbled backwards narrowly missing his stool. Billy strode towards him, hunger in his eyes and backed Steve into the wall behind him. Here was darker, only illuminated by the red neon sign by the bar. Steve felt the curled corners of the old posters tickle the back of his neck, he imagined all

the other guys necks those posters had tickled. All the other guys that Billy had pushed into this little barely lit corner, where he ran his thick hands over their bodies, kissed them roughly and let their own hands run over Billy's muscular back. He'd never been so turned on in his life.

Then Billy's hand was bundled so tightly in his t-shirt he could almost feel the cotton cracking and the other was pressed to the wall by Steve's head. And then they were kissing.

Billy's tongue slipped into Steve's mouth so readily, there was no coy foreplay. Steve wondered if he'd been staring at Billy, with his mouth agape leaving zero of his desires to the imagination. Well, even if he did, clearly it *worked* .

He could taste every morsel of him, the cheap tequila, the even cheaper cigarettes. The kiss was hungry and desperate, he'd never been kissed by such an unstoppable force before. Every girl he'd kissed before returned it carefully or hesitantly, not quite willing to fully commit to the kiss. It had driven Steve insane. So he was going to kiss Billy back with the same yearning that had never been afforded him in the past.

It was the hottest thing Steve had experienced in his life. He tried to push the twinge of sadness out of his mind, that he could have experienced this sooner; The sensation of large wandering hands making their way underneath his shirt, the tingle of stubbled lips hungrily placing a row of light nibbles across his jaw and neck.

Billy pressed into Steve further, interlocking his thick thighs with Steve's, the hardness of his crotch becoming alarmingly clear. He rolled his hips forward against Steve.

Steve swore that he could feel a moan from Billy spill into his mouth, deep, hot and desperate. He scrambled with the final buttons of Billy's shirt with one hand, revealing the trail of hair beneath his belly button and the deep V peeking out of the top of his jeans. He placed a shaking hand on the plane of Billy's abs. A jolt of electricity shooting through his body and into his crotch. He ran his hand down his middle and began to flick the leather of Billy's belt.

Billy pulled Steve's hand away hastily, eyes still hungry, "No, no Harrington," he purred, "Bar. Now."

6. Chapter 6

Summary for the Chapter:

Things get heated in Billy's bar and Steve finds something unexpected.

Notes for the Chapter:

You all came here for this, you filthy animals.

Part two of this chapter will be up tomorrow.

@mulletgrove, you are the best beta.

The bar was lower than usual, closer to the height of a particularly tall table.

Steve figured that Billy's mom wasn't a very tall woman. He pushed as many glasses away as he could before Billy was wrapped around him again, trying to avoid as many breakages as he could. He put his large palm on Billy's bare chest and tugged on the collar of his already open shirt.

"I undid the last button on your shirt for a reason, Hargrove."

Billy rolled his eyes and began to shake off his shirt. His torso was lean and golden and it tapered the way movie stars' do. The goldenness was absent in a few areas, a few scars here and there and a tattoo that was too dark to make out in the poorly lit bar. In one of his nipples was a small silver barbell and *god*, did that drive Steve wild.

“Jesus Christ” Steve muttered whilst thinking, *how the fuck did I think I was straight for so long?*

Steve hooked his arm around Billy’s waist and pulled him close again. This time he leaned into Billy, getting hungrier and hungrier with every taste. He dug his fingers into Billy’s ass, where he could feel the roundness of it beneath the tightness of his jeans. He quickly flipped their positions, slamming Billy’s back into the bar with a force he wasn’t sure he was capable of. One of Steve’s hands found their way into the mess of Billy’s thick curls and the other steadied on the bar. His lips trailed down Billy’s neck, down to his collarbone, where he nibbled hard enough to leave a mark causing Billy to flush and buck forward, Steve felt how Billy’s skin grew hotter underneath his lips.

Steve had slept with a few girls with nipple piercings, he knew how sensitive they could be so he turned his attention to Billy’s piercing. . He clasped his mouth over Billy’s nipple and sucked lightly, carefully adding in teeth, tugging playfully. Billy threw his head back with a groan and Steve could feel his knees give in slightly.

He wanted to ask Billy if he liked it, wanted to hear him whimper from his actions but Steve didn’t have to ask him, the sounds that escaped Billy were confirmation enough. He moved his hand to Billy’s crotch, palmed him through his jeans whilst he flicked the barbell with his tongue. Steve pressed his body closer to Billy’s and pulled him in for a sloppy kiss, his hand still firmly on Billy’s rock hard crotch. When Steve shifted the heel of his hand, Billy moaned absurdly into his mouth. Before the moan had subsided, Steve had already flicked the button of Billy’s jeans.

He dropped to his knees with an awkward thud that could have been heavy enough to damage something slightly. He yanked down Billy’s jeans, they caught on the curve of Billy’s ass, so Steve had to give them a final yank. He had half expected Billy to be commando under there and was kind of disappointed when there was a tight pair of

briefs between him and Billy's dick. Steve pressed his full lips over the cotton of Billy's underwear which made Billy's cock and legs twitch with excitement.

"Y-you seem to know what you're doing there, pretty boy" Billy mumbled, looking down at Steve.

Steve looked up at Billy, "I watch a lot of gay porn" he replied with a tiny shrug.

Billy's eyebrows rose comically high and shot Steve a knowing look.

Steve's eyes narrowed, you could see the cogs turning in his head, playing back the time he'd spent in front of a computer looking at girls, then looking and girls and guys with other guys and then finally just guys. Over and over again.

He cleared his throat and laughed lightly, "Yeah, I suppose that might have been a bit of a red flag."

Billy chuckled, his blue eyes lighting up fondly, "You think?"

He watched intently as Steve pulled his t-shirt over his head and tossed it to the side before he ran his fingers through his hair. Billy looked at him wide eyed, running his eyes over Steve's surprisingly broad chest and shoulders. He loved the moles and freckles that adorned Steve's body. He looked away from Steve before he could see anything in Billy's eyes that would give him away.

Steve moved on, his fingers tugged at the elastic of Billy's underwear which were already damp with precome, pulled them down and letting Billy's cock bounce free. Steve felt his mouth water from the sight of it and he had to stop himself almost laughing at the irony of it all.

He used to tease guys, tell them to get on their knees for him, accidentally meaning every word - because he was 'King Steve' and he could get away with it.

Now, here he was on his knees in a bar in California about to suck the most beautiful cock he'd ever seen.

Carefully, Steve took Billy into his mouth and ran his tongue along the shaft. Billy responded with a groan so low and guttural it went straight to Steve's cock. He took it back deep, knocking the back of his throat while grabbing Billy's ass to steady himself. Billy gently grabbed a mound of his thick chestnut hair, almost rubbing his fingers to his scalp. Steve used his free hand to work the shaft and peered up at Billy who looked so, so wrecked, Steve not knowing that Billy had never felt this good getting a blowjob before. Steve moved his hands to rest on Billy's hips, his nimble fingers settling on the bone, gripping tighter with every bob of his head. Billy looked down at Steve's large brown eyes peering up at him with lust and excitement.

He felt Billy's cock twitch when they made eye contact.

"Jesus," Billy hissed, "Harrington, you need to stop" he pushed Steve away slightly. Steve looked up at him confused at first and dejected

second.

Fuck, Steve thought. Billy paused for a suspiciously long time and sighed. Steve's mind alarmed, worried he'd done something Billy didn't like. *Fuck, fuck, FUCK!*

"I wanna make this last and at this rate I'm not gonna" Billy rubbed the back of his neck absent mindedly. A blush evident on his cheeks.

Did Billy look *bashful* ?

Steve sighed a sigh of utmost release before smacking Billy on the thigh and clambering to his feet.

"Fucking hell, Hargrove! The way you said that, it made me think I'd bitten your dick off or something."

"Shut up, Harrington" Billy rolled his eyes playfully and pulled Steve into another hungry kiss. Their bodies pulling tighter, Billy's bare cock rubbed against the fabric of Steve's jeans. Billy pulled Steve's head back to expose his long neck fully and began to nibble on his earlobe. Steve twitched with pleasure, a jolt of electricity shooting down his spine.

"These jeans are gonna have to come off if you're gonna fuck me" Billy purred into Steve's ear, just loud enough for him to hear.

“Me, fuck you?” Steve responded breathlessly.

“Well, considering you’ve been saying ‘fuck you Hargrove’ all night and this is your first time with a guy...” Billy mumbled whilst placing heavy kisses down the moles of Steve’s neck. Steve felt his trousers getting painfully tighter. Billy turned him around and held Steve flush against him, his back warm and solid against Billy’s chest.

“Yeah, it’s the 21st century, there are plenty of silicon substitutes” Steve added nonchalantly whilst Billy caressed the planes of Steve’s toned stomach.

“I thought you were straight until about 2 hours ago” Billy whispered into Steve’s ear, whilst he slowly undid the buckle of Steve’s belt. He shifted his other hand from Steve’s stomach to his neck, holding him tightly but delicately in place. Billy felt Steve’s Adam’s apple bob as he swallowed heavily.

“There’s literally,” Steve’s mouth was dry and his voice cracked slightly as he spoke, “a button in *there* designed to drive guys wild. There’s nothing gay about exploiting that.” Steve felt a grin start to form on his face.

Billy placed his lips to Steve’s ear, dipping his voice low and velvety, “That is literally the hottest thing I could ever imagine, after fucking you of course.” Billy popped the button on Steve’s jeans on the ‘*fucking*’, a small whimper leaving Steve’s mouth.

“Or me fucking you,” Steve added, his voice quivering breathlessly, “you do have a great ass,” the final word coming out like a hiss.

Billy unzipped Steve's jeans, finally letting Steve feel the sweet release of the pressure, "I've been wanting you inside me ever since I saw that cock of yours in the showers."

"You've thought about me before?" Steve muttered through his parted lips. He could feel himself coming undone as Billy caressed the cotton of his briefs.

"You've got absolutely no idea," Billy finally took Steve's cock into his hand and Steve groaned, eyes falling shut. Billy grinned as Steve's knees dipped, "all I ever wanted to do was to get down on my knees," he stroked Steve's cock slowly, "and suck your cock in those showers."

"Fuck" Steve breathed as Billy's strong hand moved up and down on him. His breath hitched as a warmth coursed through him like heroin, addictive.

"We can't fuck here," Billy released him, "health inspector could be here tomorrow." A small, disappointed whimper came from Steve as Billy pulled up his briefs and jeans so they hung loosely from his hips and gusted towards an inconspicuous door at the back of the bar, "The stairs to my apartment are through there."

Billy swaggered toward the door and pulled a small key from his jean pocket and put the key in the door. Steve gathered up both of their shirts and looked at the slightly dodgy looking door.

“If that's leading to your murder basement, I will never touch you again” Steve whined, bundling their shirts in his hands.

“Again? Someone's clearly having a good time” Billy finally turned the sticky lock, the latch clicking loudly.

“Fuck you, Billy” Steve scoffed, playfully.

“Isn't that the plan?” Billy turned around and winked at Steve who rolled his eyes, smirking.

They made their way up the stairs, via intermittent sprints and a pause to makeout, with Billy thoroughly enjoying the extra height on Steve.

Billy unlocked the front door with the same key before turning to Steve.

“Bedroom's through there” Billy headed through the little kitchen in the opposite direction.

Steve ambled into the bedroom, the moonlight bathing the small bedroom in its bluish hues. There was a bed in the centre, with unmade sheets bundled at the foot of the bed. The bed frame was simple but sturdy and the wood was old and solid. He flicked on the main light, the light bulb almost hurting his eyes from its sharpness and he immediately turned it off and headed for the bedside lamp instead. He sat on the bed and kicked off his shoes. He didn't want to take anything else off, not wanting to sprawl on Billy's bed naked like a seventies pornstar laying on a tiger skin rug.

Steve decided to pull out his phone and looked at his notification-less homescreen. He headed to Instagram and absent mindedly scrolled through his feed, the flicker of images calming his brain that was whirring at a thousand miles a minute. Suddenly he let his fingers hover over the search bar:

'Billy Hargrove'

The first page was of the bar, he almost laughed audibly when he finally saw the name '*Kokomo*'. God, now he knows why there's no sign outside. Steve scrolled through a couple of photos of regulars, of craft beer brands he'd never heard of and finally to a photo of a blue eyed woman with a blue eyed boy, clearly taken of a polaroid photograph. There was no caption, but a flurry of comments of 'R.I.P' and finally one from Billy thanking them.

He clicked on Billy's profile.

There weren't many followers or photos, they were mostly of him and Max, another of Kali scowling at the camera, a few photos of a dog that Steve was disappointed wasn't in the apartment and finally another of a handsome man smiling fondly at the photographer in the seat of Billy's blue Camaro. Steve couldn't remember much about Billy from high school, but that car was unforgettable. Granted, it was unforgettably ridiculous in the parking lot of Hawkins high school.

The guy must have been an ex boyfriend or something. He was handsome, with large brown eyes and the softest smile Steve had ever seen. He thought it must have been a coincidence that the guy kind of resembled himself, minus the ornate sleeve of tattoos adorning the handsome stranger's arm.

Suddenly a strange feeling of jealousy hit Steve.

I want Billy to take photos of me in his car , Steve thought to himself, his eyebrows raised as if surprising himself, *am I getting an actual crush on Billy Hargrove?* He sighed loudly and leaned back onto the bed and accidentally dropped the phone on his face.

“Shit” he mumbled, rubbing the spot just below his eye where the corner contacted.

He sat up and put his phone on the nightstand, paused and then plugged in Billy’s charger.

Suddenly the bedroom door opened and Billy wandered into the room, his jeans unbuckled and his heavy engineer boots nowhere to be found. He looked relaxed and comfortable, his long hair tucked behind one of his ears. A strange fondness blossomed in the pit of Steve’s stomach as well as a jolt to his cock.

Fuck, I’ve got an actual crush on Billy Hargrove.

“I leave you alone for 5 minutes and you’re already doing background checks?” Billy chuckled and padded over to the bed, his eyes wide and playful.

“Huh?” Steve responded confused in his tippy horny state, blood

wasn't exactly rushing north right now.

"That photo was from a year and a half ago. Pretty aint he?" Billy held out his phone with a notification from *sharrington* with the photo of the handsome guy in the Camaro next to it.

"Shit" Steve muttered, he must have liked it accidentally when he dropped the phone.

"Shit indeed, Harrington" Billy chuckled before putting his phone down and straddling Steve.

Billy tilted Steve's head back and kissed him hungrily but somehow softer than before. This was desperate and passionate rather than animalistic. It had suddenly stopped being a competition or force of will, rather something symbiotic between them.

Steve gave back just as despretaly, deepening the kiss and pulling Billy in by the waist. Steve wasn't sure if it was the glow of the orangey bulb of the lamp or if it was the lack of booted heaviness in Billy's steps but something was different. Something inexplicable had changed when Billy had invited him into his apartment, whatever had started this had been left in the bar and something different had started at the top of those stairs. The thought of that made Steve's heart splutter enigmatically in his chest.

Billy pushed Steve back onto the bed, his hand held Steve softly by the throat as his mouth traced a line down Steve's chest. He pulled Steve's jeans past his hips and took Steve's aching cock inside his mouth. Steve's breath hitched as he sucked in air through his teeth.

“Billy” Steve muttered breathlessly as Billy sucked sloppily around his aching cock.

“I’d say you’re ready again” Billy announced, after removing his mouth with an audible pop and threw a condom in Steve’s direction. Steve put it on quickly and turned his attention back to Billy who clearly wasn’t expecting Steve to be done so fast.

“Give me a second,” Billy tugged off his jeans. The whole movement was far more awkward than anything else Steve had seen him do that night. He watched as Billy wrestled with the denim, as he peeled the tight fabric away from his legs. Steve let the wave of endearment wash over him as he shimmied off his own jeans.

A lump formed in his throat and his head was swimming with excitement. He’d never expected this to happen, in any shape or form. His mind was running in a thousand different directions and he didn’t know which one to follow, but in this instant. He knew he wanted this and wherever this will lead.

7. Chapter 7

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy & Steve get busy in Billy's apartment.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you for sticking with this fic everyone, as someone is terrible at finishing stuff, I'm really proud I got it done.

I hope you all enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

thankyou mulletgrove for being the best beta a girl could ask for.

Billy flipped Steve off when he turned around to find Steve stifling a laugh at his attempts to pull off his jeans. He threw a bottle of lube at Steve before he pushed Steve back onto the bed and clambered on top of him, crushing their lips together hungrily.

Steve ran his hands over the arch of Billy's back, he could feel the muscle contort as Billy pulled himself closer to Steve. He gripped the bottle, and squeezed out a sizable amount of lube, found Billy's ass and ran his hand to the curve of it. He slipped one finger inside, causing Billy to let out a whimper in form of a breathless hiss. Steve captured the whimper in a sloppy kiss meanwhile his finger kept working inside of Billy.

"Keep going, I warmed myself up a little" Billy gasped.

Steve added another and hooked his fingers to find that sweet spot.

“Jesus” Billy moaned as Steve’s fingers flexed, the sound caused Steve’s dick to twitch with the knowledge of how good that felt. It wasn’t just knowing how good that felt, but the fact he was doing that to Billy. Waves of pleasure spread across over Billy’s muscular body and Steve’s mouth hung open slightly watching Billy’s face.

Steve found a spot and it caused Billy to fall forward, breath hot on Steve’s skin. He wasn’t sure how long he’d last hearing Billy’s breathy groans in his ear.

“F-Fuck me!” Billy moaned breathlessly and loud.

“Okay, flip over” Steve mumbled into Billy’s ear, whilst nudging at his shoulder.

“What do you think you’re doing?” Billy questioned with a growl, “you think I’m gonna let you fuck me from behind and miss out on watching my ass make Steve Harrington come apart?” he scoffed, “not a chance!” he added gruffly as he grabbed Steve’s hard and leaking cock before he lowered himself on to it.

They both gasped, Billy from the feeling of being filled up, Steve at the sudden tightness.

Steve threw his head back, “Oh my god.”

Billy rocked back and forth, his hips rolling deeply. It was a sight to behold, Billy's ripped body writhing in a fluid motion like that in the lamplight. Steve focused on the V of his body and the way his stomach rippled whilst he rode Steve hard. Steve had to close his eyes otherwise he'd come way too soon.

Billy would have none of that and leaned forward, gripped Steve by the chin, "Look at me, pretty boy" he panted as he pulled Steve forward into a hot kiss, sending jolts of electricity to Steve's cock.

Steve opened his eyes, his whimpers coming out strangled as Billy leaned back whilst throwing his head back as he rode Steve hard. Steve decided there and then that this was the hottest moment he'd ever had in his entire life.

His hands found the undulating curves of Billy's body, running them wherever he could, savoured it.

Billy leaned forward onto Steve. His one hand on Steve's chest and the other on Steve's mouth, he placed his thumb over Steve's swollen lower lip. Steve licked the tip of Billy's thumb whilst pulling the blonde boy into eye contact before he took the girth of Billy's thumb into his mouth and sucked softly. Steve watched as Billy's eyes glittered with focus and desire which almost sent him over the edge.

"We've gotta switch," Steve muttered breathlessly, "I'm not gonna last if we don't." He tried to avert his eyes from Billy, who was looking as close to a God like he'd ever seen on this this mortal plane. But at the same time he didn't want to stop staring. Billy was too beautiful.

Billy grinned as he panted out, “Tomorrow.”

And for some reason that statement sent Steve’s body into overdrive and he gripped his fingers into Billy’s hips and groaned, low and guttural as he came hard inside him.

With that vice like grip on his hips, Billy mirrored Steve’s groans, letting cum spurt on to Steve’s chest as he shook with the most intense orgasm he’d ever experienced.

“Tomorrow” Steve panted as he looked up at Billy.

“Tomorrow.”

Steve rolled over to turn to Billy, “I just wanna apologize.”

“You weren’t that bad man, you’ll get better” Billy chuckled, clearly proud of himself.

Steve rolled his eyes and jabbed Billy’s shoulder that was sticking out from under the covers. “I meant for being an ass in high school”, he paused, his voice growing more hesitant, “there was obviously a lot of repressed stuff going on that I didn’t know what to make of.”

“Trust me Harrington, I was a bigger ass than you could have ever been,” Billy scoffed, “you have the face of a cartoon woodland creature, nobody ever took you seriously as a bully.”

Steve sighed and scowled at Billy who remained looking at the ceiling. Steve ignored the fact that he'd brushed off his apology, there was clearly something bigger eating away at Billy.

“So how was nerdy Billy Hargrove any worse than me?” Steve asked in a more playful tone.

“Don't like to talk about it” Billy's voice was cold and solemn.

Steve wondered if he should call an uber thinking maybe he was overstaying his welcome. He lied there, in the warmth of Billy's bed letting the silence linger between them. Unsure of what to do, he let the worry nag at him a little while longer.

Billy leaned over and pulled out a pack of old looking cigarettes from his bedside drawers.

Steve broke the silence suddenly, “You know I had to text Barb earlier, I kind of came out to her as bi.” Billy turned to face him, his large blue eyes sparkling with surprise. “It felt good actually” Steve smiled fondly through relief and bewilderment.

“Not at Hawkins” Billy lit up a cigarette from the packet.

Steve was puzzled, “Huh?”

“I was in another school for 6 months, I was kind of seeing this guy, Ben from the grade above and my dad found out I was hanging out with a gay guy” Steve had heard about what Neil used to do to Billy from Max. Steve gulped involuntarily and audibly.

“So, the next day I went into school and beat the shit out of him,” Billy lifted the cigarette to his lips with shaky fingers, “I put him in hospital,” Billy took a long drag and sighed, “Then we moved to Hawkins.” There was a beat. “It was fucked up of me to do that, I honestly can’t believe I did it.” Billy muttered, toying with the edge of the covers, “control transference thing I guess. So, I kept my head down in Hawkins, I didn’t doubt for a second that my dad would kill me if anything else happened.”

Steve didn’t want to believe what Billy was telling him, but he believed every word.

Billy’s face morphed into a small smile, a heaviness had been lifted, kind of. “He’s okay now, I didn’t do any permanent damage.”

“Was he the guy in the photo?” Steve asked, pulling himself to sit upright in the bed.

“Who? No” He turned to Steve and his genuine brown eyes. “Ben

lives in Michigan now. This isn't a TV show, Harrington, not everything is connected."

Steve shrugged and plucked the cigarette out of Billy's mouth and took a long drag and handed it back to Billy for him to finish.

"I've been much better now that I've been out of that environment," he slid back down to lay flat in the bed, "It took my mom dying to get out of there for good."

Steve could see Billy almost quaking in his vulnerability. There was hesitation all across his face. He chewed on his bottom lip and Steve wanted to gently run his thumb across the teeth marks.

"Started working out more, came out as gay and did my time in therapy." Billy sighed and froze, he turned to look at Steve, "Sorry, you wanted a quick fuck, not me monologuing about my tragic backstory" he ran his hand over his face.

"I don't mind" Steve said, pulling Billy's hand away from his face and intertwined it with his own and squeezed it reassuringly. He really didn't mind. He wanted Billy to trust him, that same feeling he had the first time he saw Nancy cry was now burning inside of him again. "I really don't mind."

"Thanks Harrington" Billy squeezed Steve's hand back and yawned heavily.

He didn't ask Steve to leave.

Billy stirred first. He'd forgotten to close the blinds properly last night, the soft early morning light poured into the room. The light was still losing its pinky hues, dawn couldn't have been long ago. He carefully reached for the nightstand and checked his phone, 6:04. He stared at the white numbers, the low battery warning and a message from Max:

'Dustin told me that Harrington was in the bar last night

Fuuuuuck

How'd it go?'

He stared at the message.

Billy had drunkenly and loudly told Max that he was gay right after they got the news that his Mom had died in California. She shrugged and said that she thinks Will might be gay too and it wasn't a big deal. Before Billy could answer Neil burst in and Billy took a blow to the ribs and another to the head and another to the shoulder. Soon after that Neil was pressed to the roof of Hopper's police car. Soon after that again, Billy was packing his bags of clothes and his mom's 80's records. Then he had called his mom's friend about getting the

keys to his her bar.

He turned the phone over, not wanting the white light to wake up Steve. Billy looked over at him, who's face he'd memorised from afar years ago. This was the first time he'd really looked at Steve, slowly and carefully. He glanced at the moles on his cheeks and neck, the way he had premature wrinkles around his eyes from laughing and what looked to be a scar beneath his lip.

Billy wanted Steve, Billy had always wanted Steve. That didn't make Billy special though, everyone in Hawkins wanted Steve Harrington. Billy saw the way girls looked at him, he saw the way that guys looked at him too. As someone so deeply in the small town closet, he could recognise the same in others. The problem with Steve Harrington was that it wasn't an undeniable lust that he could act upon like an animal in heat, Billy had to watch from afar, build a picture up of what it felt like to be Steve Harrington's. Collecting a collage of moments, like the way Steve's eyes softened when talking to a pretty girl, or the way he'd stand propped up against his locker like a piece of modern art or the way his voice would become smooth like silk and the way it would drive the girls wild.

The problem was that wasn't all that Billy saw. He saw the way he'd run his hands through his hair a little too much or lightly chew his lip when he was nervous or the way he'd smile with his entire face when given the smallest opportunity to do so. He saw the way Max talked about Steve's fierce bond with Dustin, her face filled with genuine fondness, Dustin's happiness seeping into her. And, so very soon, Billy was done for.

So, Billy gazed at the boy he'd so fondly dreamt of, *for so long* , through lazy hooded eyes. The early morning swelled in the room, the chiaroscuro lighting made the sleeping Steve look like a

renaissance painting. The strands of his hair splayed dramatically over the pillow, in a sea of chestnut and shadows. Billy traced the pools of light on Steve's face, from the illumination on his cheek bones to the stripe of light just hitting the tip of his nose. Steve was so beautiful, there was a warmth, an openness to his face that he'd never seen in anyone else. Billy just wanted to touch him, as carefully as the light as not to wake him. So, he delicately ran his fingers through Steve's hair and a warmth bubbled in him that he'd never felt before.

Steve shifted, the old mattress creaking as he slung his arm over Billy's waist. The contact with his body made Steve's eyes flutter open.

Billy half expected panic in Steve's eyes, instant regret about what had happened last night. Why was he waking up in an unfamiliar apartment next to a boy he hadn't seen since high school and the fact he was waking up next to a boy at all? Suddenly that warmth in Billy's stomach turned sour and panicked and he pulled his hand away from Steve's hair. He closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep. If Harrington was going to jump ship, it'd be less terrible if he was at least fake unconscious.

Steve felt the warmth of the California sun on his face as he stirred. Maybe he should fall asleep in a sunbeam more often, cats were really on to something here. The hard stomach underneath his arm and the smell of cologne mixed with the smell of clean linen quickly took him back to the night before. The tangle of blonde hair between his fingers, the whiskey kisses up the stairs to the apartment above the bar and Billy Hargrove. The last sentiment made his breath hitch and his body stiffen slightly. He glanced at Billy, who had carefully removed his hand from Steve's hair but it still lingered close to his head on the pillow. There was a serenity to Billy's face, the sun glowing through his blonde hair. Suddenly the tautness in Steve's body dissipated.

“Billy, can we get a Starbucks or something?” Steve mumbled.

Billy opened one eye and lazily focused it on Steve, “Starbucks?” His voice was groggy and gruff and his first word of the day cracked. He closed his eyes again.

Steve, not quite able to decipher Billy’s tone. *Oh god* , maybe he really had overstayed his welcome. Maybe Billy didn’t feel the way he did after last night.

“You want me to go?” Steve asked hesitantly, his eyes wide and expectant.

“No, *god no* ” Billy snapped his eyes open to look at Steve.

Steve was still facing Billy, he let his eyelids relax over his large eyes as he breathed a barely noticeable sigh of relief.

“It’s just that you have terrible taste” Billy counted the birth marks on Steve’s face whilst Steve rested his eyes again, “Starbucks tastes like warm piss that’s been filtered through charcoal”.

Steve chuckled whilst keeping his eyes closed and rubbed his thumb in circles on Billy’s bare stomach. Billy felt serene all of a sudden. He could feel the weight of his body sink into the mattress and the heaviness of his eyelids and he laid on the cusp sleep.

“Hey Billy?” Steve asked quietly, trying not to disturb either of their dozing.

“Steve” There was a softness and lightness to his voice. The kind of lightness he’d thought he’d lost years ago.

Steve could hear the smile in Billy’s voice.

“Can you stroke my hair again?”

Notes for the Chapter:

hmu on tumblr, arringrove.

Author's Note:

hmu on tumblr @ demogrove